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A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PATRICK, DUBLIN,

AT AN

O R D I N A T I O N,

HELD BY

HIS GRACE THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN,

ON SUNDAY THE 30TH DAY OF MAY, 1779,

(BEING TRINITY SUNDAY.)

By J O H N B A I R D, D. D.

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MDCCCLXXIX.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PATRICK, DUBLIN

ON

THE DAY OF THE WEEK

OF THE MONTH

OF THE YEAR

OF THE CENTURY

OF THE MILLENNIUM

OF THE WORLD

OF THE UNIVERSE

OF THE GODHEAD

OF THE TRINITY

OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

OF THE CHURCH

OF THE PEOPLE

OF THE NATION

OF THE KINGDOM

OF THE GLORY

OF THE LIFE

OF THE DEATH

OF THE RESURRECTION

OF THE JUDGMENT

OF THE HEAVENS

OF THE EARTH

OF THE SEA

OF THE AIR

OF THE FIRE

OF THE WATER

OF THE LIGHT

OF THE DARKNESS

OF THE SILENCE

OF THE NOISE

OF THE PEACE

OF THE WAR



BY JOHN BARR, D.D.

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

AND OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PATRICK

OF DUBLIN

IN THE YEAR 1847

AND SOLD BY THE AUTHOR

AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PATRICK

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OF DUBLIN

IN THE YEAR 1847

AND SOLD BY THE AUTHOR

TO THE
MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,
HIS GRACE,
ROBERT,
BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE,
LORD ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN,
PRIMATE AND METROPOLITAN OF IRELAND,
THIS SERMON
IS MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY
HIS GRACE'S

MOST DUTIFUL,

AND MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

JOHN BAIRD.

TO THE

MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

HIS GRACE

ROBERT

BY

MORSE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

PRIMATE AND METROPOLITAN OF IRELAND

THIS 18 FEB 62

IS MOST HUMBLY INCENSED

BY

HIS GRACE

MORSE ARCHBISHOP

AND MOST OBEYANT SERVANT

JOHN BAIRD

A

S E R M O N, &c.

St. MATTHEW X. 16.

*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:
Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as
doves.*

ACCORDING to our best ideas of the divine nature, nothing can be reckoned of such importance in the eye of God, as the establishment of truth and righteousness among the rational subjects of his kingdom. For this end, as alone adequate to the designs of infinite wisdom and perfection, we need not, therefore, wonder when we see astonishing interpositions of his providence.—To re-establish this important interest among mankind, when it was fatally obstructed and impaired, a most extraordinary person, exercising the highest authority, appeared in this world, known by the name of Jesus Christ. And, this being his desti-

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nation,

nation, he, accordingly, employed every suitable mean to promote those internal and immortal concerns of men, which are founded on the rectitude of their understandings, and on the purity and comfort of their hearts.

HAVING begun this momentous ministry himself, and proved his mission to be from heaven by many miraculous works, equally intended for the immediate relief of wretched sufferers, and to facilitate the reception of his future, and far greater, bounty; *Jesus called unto him his twelve disciples, whom he had chosen at different times, and ordained them**; and, giving them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease, as an unquestionable and salutary evidence of their authority also, *he sent them forth to preach.*

Now

* St. Mark iii. 4. Are we here to conceive that the disciples were at this time ordained *Deacons*? And that when their master *breathed* on them, after his resurrection, they received the order of *Priesthood*, together with the other powers annexed peculiarly to their high office? There seem to be strong grounds to believe that we should. And if so, the use of the words, without the action, at the ordination of *Priests*, and the consecration of *Bishops*, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, &c.* is fully justified.

Now, seeing the exercise of such extraordinary powers was only to be subservient to an higher end, will it not be natural for every man to expect, that this mission, connected with them, is to be of vast extent and importance?

WE shall, however, see that it was so directed, by the infinite wisdom of that *Teacher come from God*, that the full intent of it did not immediately appear. The truths to be discovered by it, were, perhaps in compassion to the circumstances of men, to acquire perfection, like the light of the morning, by slow and easy steps. At this time, *Jesus commanded his disciples, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not : But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Being originally the people of God, the *Jews* were first to have the gracious terms of repentance and reconciliation offered to them. The disciples were, therefore, just to repeat, and enforce by their miracles, what John had before preached to the people; that the kingdom of the *Messiah*, predicted in their ancient scriptures, was now about to be established; when, all ceremonial performances being
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to cease, nothing but *worshipping God in spirit and in truth* was to be required, or would be accepted by him to eternal life; to baptize as he did*, such as were willing to prepare themselves for that kingdom; and to conciliate the attention and affection of all, by a *free* and disinterested exercise of those powers which they had received.

THE execution of this part of their master's will, within the fixed bounds, and during that preliminary dispensation, seems to have fulfilled the disciples's *first* commission.

BUT, as the words now read, and those which follow them, plainly point much farther†, as will hereafter appear;

* St. John iv. 2.

† When they received their first commission, that the apostles themselves might know, that they were appointed to a work of the largest extent, and were from thenceforward to be constantly employed in opening up, and propagating, the truths of the Gospel, as they should be instructed and authorized, is manifest from the intimations, connected with that commission, in two of the following verses: *What I tell you in darkness*, said Christ, *that speak ye in the light: And what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house tops.*—*And verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the son of man be come.*

appear ; as all the subsequent instructions given them, contained only enlargements of their commission, and tended to the perfection of the great, unfolding, design ;—and the highest pleasure must be derived to the contemplative mind, from tracing its progress ;—we may be permitted, without observing method exactly, to follow those illustrious ministers from this period, till the extent and tenor of their whole commission come more fully within our view.

INDEED, during his own personal ministry, while he performed the more fatiguing and generous parts of it himself *, we still observe, that Christ confined that of his disciples, nearly within the same compass, which he had at first prescribed. But no sooner was *the work given him to do painfully and patiently finished*, than the universal purpose of *Grace*, and the fullest beams of *Truth*, appeared. Then,—instead of the precept to *preach only in the cities and towns of Judæa* ; and of the prohibition to *enter* into those of the *Gentiles*, or even of the *Samaritans*, where many of the descendants of *Abraham* lived ;—they were told, that they should be his *witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa,*
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* The journey into Samaria, St. John iv.

and in Samaria, and to the outermost parts of the earth ; and the command was immediately given them, *Go ye, and teach all nations.* Then also—the sphere of their knowledge widening with that of their action—the *Jews* they persuaded to forsake, totally, the beloved institutions of the law of *Moses* ; the *Gentiles*, the superstitious and pompous worship of their deities ; and both to embrace the spiritual and simple institutions of the Gospel, and the holy course of life which it enjoins. The illumination of the whole world, in short, involved in the blackest clouds of ignorance, respecting the one true cause and governour of all, his worship, and the terms of acceptance with him, became the object of their ministry.

BUT, to abolish most ancient, and widely received, customs ; some of them of divine appointment itself ; to dethrone the very deities of the nations ; to restore and establish the primitive system of truth, astonishingly improved ; to change the face of the world, and even the minds and the hearts of men ;—with all the benign and convincing evidences of their authority ;—how arduous the attempt ! how hazardous the undertaking ! A design so repugnant to the religious regulations of
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states and empires*, to the obstinate prejudices, and the corrupt passions and affections of mankind, could not but meet with universal resistance, and expose those who were employed in giving it effect to the utmost perils and dangers.

HERE, then, we find the full force of the words in the Text: *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.* For though, as a faithful hint, at their first setting out in his service, Christ prepared and armed his disciples, in these words, against all the difficulties, discouragements, and dangers, which they would meet

* Of that empire, especially, which then comprehended almost the known world, the ancient constitution and the enormous power were such, as, in human judgment, to have rendered the simple profession of Christianity impossible. The Roman legislature appears to have been early jealous of any innovation in point of public worship; and we find the magistrates, during the old Republic, frequently interposing in cases of that nature. (Val. Max. L. i. C. iii.)—And Livy (L. xxxix C. xvi.) mentions it as an established principle of the earlier ages of the commonwealth, to guard against the introduction of foreign ceremonies of religion; and says (L. xxxvi. C. xxv.) that unlicensed assemblies of the people were not to be suffered, according to an old and fixed maxim of the Roman government. Hence it is evident, that the Teachers especially of Christianity, would be deemed insurgents against the *ancient* and *fundamental* laws of that state; and punished for attempting its subversion.

meet with in the course of that service; it was not yet till the execution of their *second* and complete mission, that the persecutions, here foretold, befell them, as *Apostles*. They suffered none, while they only preached *John's* doctrine, *healed the sick, and cast unclean spirits* out of those who were *possessed* by them.—The *Baptist* himself was *beheaded* through private resentment; and not for his public ministry.—Our Saviour's view, in this place, therefore, certainly reached to the *future* mission which the disciples were to execute; and his words may be thus interpreted: “Behold, what a perverse and wicked world are ye going into, with the character which ye are hereafter to sustain! It is not till ye have unfolded the full design of your mission, that ye will experience its malice and violence. Then will your enemies indulge the same fierce and unrelenting disposition, in persecuting and distressing you, as ye see ravenous *wolves* have, in killing and tearing the defenceless *sheep*. Your perseverance in my service, will stimulate their rage from one degree to another: *Ye shall be delivered up to the counsels*, as malefactors, *be scourged in the synagogues*, as apostates; *and be brought before governours and kings*, as incendiaries and rebels.”——When these troubles, accordingly,

ingly, came upon them, the histories of their lives testify.—

THAT they might neither give any causeless provocations, nor heedlessly expose themselves to danger ; that they might acquire the regard and esteem of some, and avert, if possible, the wrath of others ; our Lord recommended to his disciples, in the exercise of their important functions, the utmost prudence, under the image of the *serpent's wisdom* ; together with that innocence and gentleness which eminently distinguish *doves*. Discretion and simplicity, without subtilty or weakness, and the performance of the most beneficent miracles, were the only weapons which they were permitted, in the discharge of their office, to employ. But, however cautious, inoffensive, and harmless ; however kind and bountiful to the souls and bodies of men they might be ; he still warned them that they should, nevertheless, feel the last effort of human malevolence ; *ye shall be put to death*.

It is very remarkable that the disciples, properly so called, were apprised of sufferings which seem to have been peculiar to themselves. Though the *seventy*, who

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were sent forth to preach the gospel as well as they, were told that they should be *as lambs among wolves*; importing indeed a certain degree of danger and distress; yet no special predictions of this sort, uttered by Christ in the Gospels, appear to have had any respect to them. Whereas continual, and the most severe afflictions were declared to be the lot of *the twelve*, who were to be treated by their adversaries, in the same manner as they were to see their *Master and Lord* had been.

WE must hence conclude that their station and office was to be different from that of others, which constituted them the particular objects of the world's indignation and fury;—that there was to be something in their situation, which gave a propriety to the direction of all those warnings and admonitions to them especially; even admitting that others were to have their share in the same sufferings. And we shall, accordingly, see that they were to be his *chosen disciples and servants*; the persons who were to succeed himself, in part of the commission and authority which he had received from God. It was before-determined that they should be eminently his church; that is, not only the *first* and *principal pastors* of it, under whom, in the capacity
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of ordinary teachers, others were likewise to be employed ; but have also the exclusive power of gathering, establishing, and governing that church. By the plenary commission which the *eleven* received from Christ, at his first appearance to them, after his resurrection, this power was clearly conferred. *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And breathing on them, he said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* From this time forth, and never before, we behold them acting in the new dignity, which they then acquired, of *Apostles**. While he remained on earth, *Christ himself was the apostle and high-priest of our profession, and the whole*

* In the Gospels, where Christ's own life and ministry are recorded, the word *apostle*, it is true, frequently occurs. But this seems chiefly to have been occasioned by the familiarity of the term and idea to the minds of the evangelic authors, when, long after that divine life and ministry were finished, they reduced the sacred history to writing : In the same manner as they connect the *treachery* of Judas with his very election to the discipleship. Though in one place (St. Luke vi. 19.) it be said, that *of his disciples* Christ chose twelve, whom also he named *apostles* ; yet it is no otherwise possible to reconcile this with the narratives of the four Evangelists, than by supposing that they were so named by him then, by way of anticipation only, and to mark their designation to their future office. For the office itself, which strictly constitutes *apostles*, they never executed, till their master was taken from them.

whole company of the disciples were his ministers; but being about to go to the Father, from whom he came, he delegated, to certain successors, that power and authority which he had exercised. When *the heavens received him*, they were to have the sole superintendency and management of the affairs of his kingdom here below*.

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* Every one open to conviction, it is presumed, will think this very obvious. But as a farther proof that the apostles occupied an higher rank, than other ministers did, ever after this last commission, let any one read, with attention, the first chapter of the Acts. There, in the midst of *an hundred and twenty disciples*, these were the *eleven apostles*, the *seventy disciples*, and thirty-nine more, the greatest part of whom were probably preachers themselves, we see St. Peter's motion to fill up the vacancy in the *apostolate*, occasioned by the tragical death of the traitor. He says, *he had been numbered with them, and had obtained part of this ministry*: But the *Bishoprick*, to which he was destined, another was to take.—*Wherefore of these men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this Ministry and Apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell,—and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*—Here we perceive a manifest distinction—a twofold office, MINISTRY and APOSTLESHIP.

BEING then *the pillars and the ground of truth, in the house of God*; in this character, particularly, the apostles would most fully experience the import of their master's words to them, at the beginning. As the chief *shepherd* himself was *smitten, and the sheep scattered abroad*, they would now find themselves *set forth as sheep for the slaughter, and as it were appointed to death*, by the jealousy and impiety of men; and that the fold which they were enclosing might be, at once, thrown down.

BUT that, after their death itself, inflicted by wicked hands, for this malicious purpose, the scheme of truth and happiness, which they had been employed in bringing to light, might still be preserved and perpetuated, divine wisdom had provided that others, with the same commission and authority, should be solemnly *sent by* them, as Christ had *sent* themselves. No other meaning can be fixed on those words, which concluded the last instructions which the apostles received from him; *Lo! I am with you alway even unto the end of the world*. Here a *succession*, of their own order, is plainly signified, and a precept implied to preserve and transmit it. And as they were always to have the presence,

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the direction, and aid of the Holy Ghost, for their illumination, comfort, and assistance, in evangelizing the nations, and governing *the church of the living God*; so is the same promise extended, in proportion as exigencies may require, to all such as, *observing* what Christ thus *commanded*, and the apostles exemplified and prescribed, should represent them in their office, or should derive authority to preach the Gospel from such representatives, through all ages*.

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* But as, *in late times*, there have been many and great deviations from the *divine* and *apostolic constitutions*, it becomes those who have been involved in such deviations, seriously to enquire, how far this indulgent promise may be restricted, in regard to them;—how far their privileges and happiness may be affected, by an obstruction of those fountains from whence they were appointed to flow. It is absurd to suppose, that the glorious founder of the Christian church, and his immediately commissioned and inspired Ministers, left that church without her proper constitutions; and a revolt from them cannot but be the most ungrateful disobedience, and incur his displeasure.—What that orderly fabric was, when first erected, is certainly far from being an unworthy object of our contemplation.

Now, we shall find that the first government, or rather that the very being and contexture of the church at first, was, in respect to its teachers, perfectly *hierarchical*; that is, consisted in a subordination of the sacred orders, distinguished by the names of *Apostles*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*. After the solemn instalment of *Matthias* in the *Apostleship*, the ordination

THE divine wisdom displayed, in thus appointing a regular, successive ministry, will not, perhaps, till after
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ordination of seven of *the last* was the first episcopal act which the apostles performed (Acts vi.)—Next, as in the case of *Matthias*, they ordained, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, *Barnabas* and *Saul*, *Apostles*, after the death of *James*, the brother of *John*; that they might be sent on a mission to the *Gentiles*. (Acts xiii. 2. 3.)—Even St. *Paul* himself, here called *Saul*, though miraculously called to the ordinary ministry, was yet to be solemnly invested, by the hands of the apostles, with episcopal authority.—Afterwards, we read (Acts xv. 6. 23.) that the church of Jerusalem was composed of *Apostles* and *Presbyters*; and that the letters sent to the *Gentiles*, by those two new *Apostles*, and *Judas* and *Silas*, who were *Presbyters*, were thus superscribed: *The Apostles, and Elders, or Presbyters, and Brethren, send greeting unto the Brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.* The dignity which St. *Paul* conferred on *Timothy* and *Titus*, though they were to be subordinate or obedient to himself, was plainly episcopal, the one being ordained by him the first (ἐπίσκοπος) Overseer, or Bishop of *Ephesus*, and the other that of *Crete*. Will any one still doubt, notwithstanding these authorities deduced from the purest records, that the institution of Episcopacy is *divine* and *apostolical*?

What else, but such a basis, could have supported the superstructure which was immediately and universally raised? For we no sooner open the histories of the *Mother Churches*, than we read first of their apostolic founders, then of their *Bishops* who succeeded them, their *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*. In the church of *Jerusalem*, *Simeon* succeeded *James*, then *Justus*, *Zaccheus*, *Tobias*, *Benjamin*, &c. and so forward, till there had been a *Suc-*
cession

due consideration, appear to every one obvious;—
especially to such as slight it, and reckon the temporal

cession of sixteen *Hebrew* bishops, at the siege of the *Jews* under the emperor *Adrian*; when a line of Bishops, of a *Gentile* race, began in that Holy See (Euseb. Eccles. Hist. B. iv. C. iv.) At *Rome*, St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* were followed by *Linus*, *Anencletus*, *Clemens*, *Evaristus*; in short, by an uninterrupted succession, as the catalogue of its Bishops, in every one's hands, shews. In the reign of *Verus*, *Theophilus*, who was the sixth from the apostles, flourished in his presidency over the church at *Antioch* (Euseb. Eccles. Hist. B. iv. C. xx.) *Annianus* succeeded St. *Mark*, in the Episcopate of *Alexandria*, who was succeeded by *Avilius*, *Ignatius*, *Cerdo*, &c. (Euseb. Eccles. Hist. B. ii. iii.) *Polycarp*, who had been instructed by the Apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, was, by the Apostles themselves, ordained Bishop of the church of *Smyrna* in *Asia*, &c. (Euseb. Eccles. Hist. B. iv. C. xiv.)

That this *Episcopatus*, which those illustrious successors of the apostles occupied, was very different from the *Presbyteratus* or *Presbyterium*, is so self-evident, that it would be ridiculous to enter on a serious proof of it. Let one fact, however, be set forth: When the persecuted Christians of *Lyons* sent *Irenæus*, on an embassy to the bishop of *Rome*, in the reign of *Antoninus*, they expressly stile him *Presbyter* of that Church: Where, after his return from *Rome*, he was ordained Bishop (*Vita Irenæi*.) The same *Irenæus* himself, in his refutation of Heresies, forms a beautiful chain of the apostolic succession thus: “Non enim per alios dispositionem salutis nostræ cognovimus, quàm per eos per quos evangelium pervenit ad nos: quod quidem tunc præconiaverunt, postea verò per Dei voluntatem in scripturis

poral supports of it burthensome. Every one, indeed, must readily perceive and acknowledge that, to *a people who walked in darkness, and dwelt in the land of the shadow of death*; that, on a comparison of their doctrines,

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scripturis nobis tradiderunt, fundamentum et columnam fidei nostræ futurum.——Traditionem itaque apostolorum in toto mundo manifestatam, in omni ecclesia adest perspicere omnibus qui vera velint videre; et habemus annumerare eos qui ab apostolis instituti sunt episcopi in ecclesiis, et successores eorum usque ad nos, &c." (Iren. adver. Hæres. Lib. ii. Cap. i. iii.) A most valuable monument of ecclesiastical antiquity is, that letter (B. x. L. xcvi.) which *Pliny* wrote to *Trajan*, about forty years at most after the death of *St. Paul*; wherein he informs the Emperour, that *the contagious superstition* (so he called the Christian religion) *was not confined to the cities only, but had spread its infection among the country villages; and that prosecutions were likely to extend to persons of all ranks, and ages, and even of both sexes.* Numerous must have been the Clergy employed in spreading this divine light; and yet, whatever inferior dignities they might possess, it is clear from history that *Evarestus*, or, perhaps, his successor, *Alexander*, had the Presidency, in those parts, over them all. In short, we must either stop our ears against the language of antiquity, or boldly say that we disregard its authority, or we must own, that the superiority of the Episcopate over the Presbytery, was established with our Religion, and is *Jure Divino*. Indeed there never was a Christian church on earth, during fifteen hundred years, in which that apostolic badge of honour and power did not exist. And what endless schisms and controversies prevail, where that power is renounced; what absolute contempt of union, order, and impartiality; who is ignorant?

either with the gross ignorance of the vulgar heathen; or with that feeble lamp of Philosophy, wherein was collected however all the light that could be supplied from all the sources of human reason, the apostles were *the lights of the world*, and their ministry was highly advantageous, at the first appearance of Christianity; yet it is not so easy to give ourselves, who have been always accustomed to see an uninterrupted order of established teachers, a just and adequate idea of the value of the blessing. But, though it might be forgotten by men, how it had fared with the world, when it was without stated and authoritative instruction; the great *Bishop of souls* foresaw, that the costly building, which he was to erect by the apostles, on the foundation of his own doctrines and death, would quickly be destroyed, unless there were *watchmen set upon its walls, who should never hold their peace*. He well knew *what was in man*;—the natural bias of *old transgressors*;—he knew that their understandings would again be darkened, their wills enslaved, and their affections attached to unworthy objects; that truth and virtue would soon lose their influence over the mind, and be driven from a steady course of action and duty; he knew, in short, that men would instantly

stantly break the harmony of his new system, fly off from their central heat, and desert their light and comfort, without certain stars, to use his own words, constantly *held out in his right hand*, to point to the SUN of Righteousness.—And we thank thee, most blessed Lord ! for this instrument of piety and religion, employed on the earth, these seventeen hundred years ! And we confirm our trust in thy providence, that this ministry shall be transmitted to *faithful men*, and made successful, in the salvation of multitudes of believers, while *the ordinances of heaven* shall last !

BUT this ministry, of such vast importance in itself, will require of those who are employed, even in the common offices of it, the utmost exertion of their mind and endeavours.—To be messengers and stewards of the Lord, to teach and admonish, to feed and provide for his family ; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through him for ever ; to reclaim from error in religion, and to reform from viciousness in life ; to *persuade men by the terrors of the Lord, and to constrain them by his love and mercy ; to bind up the broken-hearted, and*
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proclaim liberty to the captives ; what fidelity ! what skill ! what meekness and compassion, are necessary !—And, though our circumstances be very different from those of the apostles, yet what peculiar *wisdom* will still be requisite, in tracing and establishing truth, amidst the unbounded spaces of deception ! What knowledge must be exercised, in exposing the disingenuous artifices, and intricate subtilties, of those *wolves* and *foxes*, of those *thieves* and *robbers*, who covertly, in a Christian land, endeavour to undermine revelation, by disputing its unrivalled prerogative of acquainting men with the first cause, the fountain of all being, of all life and happiness ;—of communicating the knowledge of the system of duties, which they owe to their Maker, to one another, and themselves ;—of ascertaining the conditions of pardoning mercy, and confirming the expectation of a future and endless state of felicity ; insisting, in direct opposition to facts and experience, that these are all matters discoverable by unassisted reason alone. Again : what attention to preserve, unbroken, that union, which the perfect author and finisher of all truth and righteousness, has formed between *faith and good works*, which yet too many impiously divorce, and put asunder. And, lastly, what affection

affection and fatherly solicitude will it require, to rectify and comfort the gloomy and disquieted consciences of those *who have been entangled by doubtful disputations*; and to cool the over-heated brain with the refreshing influences of God's word!

THE surest remedy for all sorts of spiritual disorders is, to preach the Gospel simply, and without any mixture, or refinement. *It is the power of God.* Of this the apostles, who converted the world by it, had the fullest experience; they *always triumphed in Christ*. This, therefore, beloved, after we shall have this day been *apostolically sent forth*, must, invariably and assiduously, be made one of the principal objects of our attention. A deep sense of obligation to our Almighty Maker, our condescending Saviour, and Holy Sanctifier, united in substance, and united in the work of salvation, must be impressed on the minds of mankind. They must have disclosed to them the gracious promises, and the equitable conditions, of the new covenant; the manifold grace of God to them, and their duty to him; be informed that this *grace appeared to teach them that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously,*
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and godly in this present world: And, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech them by us, we must pray them in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God.

By such brief hints we may learn, what pains and diligence, what discernment and care, are necessary, in order to the right discharge of our duty as ministers of the Gospel, and how we are, in some measure, to *make proof of our ministry*. Here the importance of the divine command is evident: To join the *wisdom of the serpent*, with the innocence and simplicity of the *dove*, and the *lamb*. Indeed, *who is sufficient for these things!* But *this treasure is hid in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God!*

As every thing profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, must be derived from, and strictly grounded on, the holy scriptures, we will all perceive, and may we duly remember, how studious we ought to be in reading and learning those scriptures; as the church, in an excellent admonition, requires us to be. The apostles

tles had their knowledge of what they taught, by immediate instruction from Christ, or immediate inspiration. Ours must be acquired by labour and industry, in the perusal and investigation of their writings; and, therefore, we ought to forsake and set aside, as much as possible, all worldly cares and studies whatever. Nor is a speculative acquaintance with these holy pages by any means sufficient; we must revolve them for serious and practical purposes; for the uses of piety; for our own religious edification, that we may the more perfectly know how to promote that of others. With this view, we ought, particularly and frequently, to read and reflect on the pure and holy life, and the patient and meritorious death of our Redeemer, with the greatest concern, devotion, and love. Believing him, whose ministers we are, to be *the Son of God, the Saviour and Judge of the world*, we ought in the most dutiful manner, to subject our own minds to his authority, look for his promises, and dread his displeasure, that our *faith may be shewn by our works*.

THROUGH his mediation, we must also continually pray to God the Father, for the heavenly assistance of
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the Holy Ghost, that, by daily reading and weighing of the scriptures, we may wax riper and stronger in our ministry, and fashion our lives, and the lives of others, after the rule and doctrine of Christ. Most certain it is, without a divine inspiration and help, we can neither have the will for our office, nor the ability to perform the duties of it.

AND for all these *strivings with men*, for all these *labours of love*, and these preparations and purifications of ourselves—is there no reward!—Yes!—What value can be put on the comfort and joy, which must result from being *eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame*; turning men from sin to righteousness, from Satan to God; and *quickenning the dead*, into spiritual and everlasting life! If the virtuous disposition, if benevolence and charity, the love of God, and the love of his creation, form the principal substance of heavenly happiness itself, and open up sources of eternal bliss; when we see that those plants, so precious, and yet so tender, may, by our careful culture, and seasonable preservation from the inclement blasts of these lower regions, be raised to the fairest and fullest blossoms, and to immortal

tal fruit above, what satisfaction! what gladness, must be our present portion! And our confidence may rest on those gracious and infallible words of the master whom we serve: *Ye are they that have followed me, in the regeneration of the world; and lo! I appoint unto you a kingdom!* Hence we may look forward to those crowns of righteousness, which he has promised to all who have thus loved him.

F I N I S.



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